

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A computerized method of branding a software product comprising:  
assigning a namespace to each of a plurality of resource files, said resource files each containing one or more branding resources;  
grouping the resource files according to the assigned namespaces;  
executing an interface to call a group of resource files as a function of a selected namespace; and  
searching the called group of resource files for one or more of the branding resources to be installed in the software product.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising centrally storing the plurality of branding resources.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein assigning the namespaces comprises identifying which of the branding resources contained in the resource files correspond to specific brands.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the resource files comprises a dynamic-link library.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the branding resources reside in one or more of the dynamic-link libraries associated therewith, and wherein executing the interface comprises accessing the branding resources in the associated dynamic-link libraries.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the branding resources comprises an image associated with the software product.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the branding resources comprises a character string identifying the software product.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising embedding, in each of the resource files, metadata identifying the branding resources contained therein, and wherein the called group of resource files is searched for the branding resources to be installed in the software product based on the embedded metadata.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the resource files has a branding manifest associated therewith, and further comprising identifying the branding resources contained in each of the resource files with the associated branding manifest.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein identifying the branding resources includes indicating, with the associated branding manifest, whether one or more of the branding resources contained in the resource file can be overwritten by a third party.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein identifying the branding resources includes indicating, with the associated branding manifest, a resource type for each of the branding resources contained in the resource file.

12. The method of claim 9, further comprising adding one or more branding resources to at least one of the resource files and updating the branding manifest associated therewith.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein the branding manifest comprises an extensible markup language file.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the interface is an application programming interface.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the software product comprises a plurality of binary files organized into components, each of said components having a component manifest associated therewith for identifying the component and specifying one or more dependencies of the component, and further comprising specifying a dependency from at least one selected component to the interface for accessing the branding resources to be installed in connection with the selected component.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein specifying the dependency from the selected component to the interface includes specifying the selected namespace, said selected namespace corresponding to a specific brand.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein specifying the selected namespace includes specifying another namespace corresponding to a different specific brand to modify the branding of the software product.

18. One or more computer-readable media have computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 1.

19. One or more computer-readable media comprising:  
a plurality of centrally stored resource files, said resource files each containing one or more branding resources and having a namespace assigned thereto, said resource files further being grouped according to the assigned namespaces; and  
a branding engine for calling a group of resource files as a function of a selected namespace and searching the called group of resource files for one or more of the branding resources to be installed in the software product.

20. The computer-readable media of claim 1, wherein the assigned namespaces identify which of the branding resources contained in the resource files correspond to specific brands.

21. The computer-readable media of claim 1, wherein each of the resource files comprises a dynamic-link library.

22. The computer-readable media of claim 21, wherein the branding resources reside in one or more of the dynamic-link libraries associated therewith, and wherein the branding engine accesses the branding resources in the associated dynamic-link libraries.

23. The computer-readable media of claim 1, wherein at least one of the branding resources comprises an image associated with the software product.

24. The computer-readable media of claim 1, wherein at least one of the branding resources comprises a character string identifying the software product.

25. The computer-readable media of claim 1, wherein each of the resource files includes embedded metadata identifying the branding resources contained therein, and wherein the branding engine searches the called group of resource files for the branding resources to be installed in the software product based on the embedded metadata.

26. The computer-readable media of claim 1, wherein each of the resource files has a branding manifest associated therewith identifying the branding resources contained therein.

27. The computer-readable media of claim 9, wherein the branding manifest includes a data field for indicating whether one or more of the branding resources contained in the associated resource file can be overwritten by a third party.

28. The computer-readable media of claim 9, wherein the branding manifest includes a data field for indicating a resource type for each of the branding resources contained in the resource file.

29. The computer-readable media of claim 9, wherein the branding manifest comprises an extensible markup language file.

30. The computer-readable media of claim 13, wherein the branding engine comprises an application programming interface.

31. A computerized method of branding a software product comprising:  
    assigning a namespace to each of a plurality of resource files, said resource files each containing one or more branding resources;  
    embedding, in each of the resource files, metadata identifying the branding resources contained therein;  
    executing an interface to call at least one of the resource files as a function of a selected namespace; and

searching the called resource file for one or more of the branding resources to be installed in the software product based on the embedded metadata.

32. The method of claim 31, further comprising grouping the resource files according to the assigned namespaces, and wherein the interface calls a group of resource files as a function of a selected namespace.

33. The method of claim 31, further comprising centrally storing the plurality of branding resources.

34. The method of claim 31, wherein assigning the namespaces comprises identifying which of the branding resources contained in the resource files correspond to specific brands.

35. The method of claim 31, wherein each of the resource files comprises a dynamic-link library.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein the branding resources reside in one or more of the dynamic-link libraries associated therewith, and wherein executing the interface comprises accessing the branding resources in the associated dynamic-link libraries.

37. The method of claim 31, wherein at least one of the branding resources comprises an image associated with the software product.

38. The method of claim 31, wherein at least one of the branding resources comprises a character string identifying the software product.

39. The method of claim 31, further comprising indicating, with the embedded metadata, whether one or more of the branding resources contained in the resource files can be overwritten by a third party.

40. The method of claim 39, further comprising indicating, with the embedded metadata, a resource type for each of the branding resources contained in the resource files.

41. The method of claim 39, further comprising adding one or more branding resources to at least one of the resource files and updating the metadata embedded therein.

42. The method of claim 39, wherein an extensible markup language file contains the embedded metadata.

43. The method of claim 31, wherein the interface is an application programming interface.



44. The method of claim 31, wherein the software product comprises a plurality of binary files organized into components, each of said components having a component manifest associated therewith for identifying the component and specifying one or more dependencies of the component, and further comprising specifying a dependency from at least one selected component to the interface for accessing the branding resources to be installed in connection with the selected component.

45. The method of claim 44, wherein specifying the dependency from the selected component to the interface includes specifying the selected namespace, said selected namespace corresponding to a specific brand.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein specifying the selected namespace includes specifying another namespace corresponding to a different specific brand to modify the branding of the software product.

47. One or more computer-readable media have computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 31.